

# NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

## Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District

5855 Capistrano Ave, Suite D, Atascadero, CA 93422 | 805.460.7272 | www.us-ltrcd.org

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Forest Health and Fire Resiliency on Private Property in Santa Margarita		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	6790 Calf Canyon Hwy, Santa Margarita, CA 93453	<b>COUNTY</b>	San Luis Obispo
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District		
<b>CONTACT</b>	Spencer Gordon		
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### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District (USLT RCD) proposes implementing a forest health and fire resiliency project on a private residence located adjacent to State Highway 58 (previously state highway 178) in the town of Santa Margarita, San Luis Obispo County. The project site spans approximately 11.5 acres on private property. The project area is dispersed across riparian and blue oak woodland with intermixed gray pine (*Pinus sabiniana*) individuals.

Shaded fuel breaks along property boundaries will provide added protection to existing facilities on the parcel in addition to surrounding communities in the event of a wildfire. Fuel reduction in the interior of the parcel will serve to increase forest health and benefit native flora and fauna. Downed and dead surface fuels will be reduced along with and hazard trees. Branches will be removed at a minimum of six feet from the ground, or three times the height of the brush underneath the tree. Selectively thinning live/healthy trees up to 8 inches DBH will occur as well as live and dead shrubs. Trees will be thinned minimum ten feet apart from the drip line on flat slopes, 20 feet apart on slopes up to 40%.

Designated trees and shrubs will be limbed, and bucked in place utilizing handheld chainsaws and pole saws. Slash produced from tree felling and bucking activity will be chipped, scattered and or burned via biochar kiln. No protected status flora or fauna have been observed at the tree felling locations. No sensitive cultural resources have been observed or documented within the project boundaries. No excavation or ground disturbance will occur. The project will include buffers to exclude work within the riparian area.

### EXEMPTION STATUS


- Categorical Exemption Type and Section: Class 4 14CCR§15304 Class 4 Minor Alterations to Land
- Statutory Exemption (state code section):
- Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

### REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

This project fits under 14CCR§15304 Class 4 Minor Alterations to Land. This project will treat a very small/specific area and is designed to minimize the risks and hazards associated with potential wildfire and threat to natural resources. Through project design, these treatments will be important in protecting first responders and the public in the event of wildfire. Thinning of diseased or dying pine species in this area will allow for the restoration of grasslands, improve oak woodland conditions, and allow for more forage for wildlife in the area. The entirety of this project will occur on private land.

Field review by USLT RCD staff confirmed that no exceptions apply that would preclude the use of a notice of exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, populations and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/ traffic, utilities and service systems, or to wildfire.

### DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

  
Devin Best, Executive Director  
Upper Salinas Las Tablas RCD

Date 1/25/24